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THE GERMAN CLUB

For the benefit of those teachers who are responsible for the pleasure and profit, which means the success, of a German Club, I have been asked to tell some of my devices, my experiences, and my difficulties and methods of avoiding them.

A few excellent articles have been written on this subject. One, in the introduction to "Easy German Conversation" by Philip S. Allen, and Paul H. Phillipson (Ginn and Co.), I should advise every club sponsor to read. The expressions used in Parliamentary Practice are invaluable, though we use them in a much simplified form. The games and suggestions are most helpful and probably practical in most clubs. However, many of them it is impossible to use in a club like mine. Messrs. Allen and Phillipson presuppose a much greater familiarity with German, a larger vocabulary, and a greater readiness of speech than my pupils, many of them with only one year of high-school German as a background, possess.

The German Department of the Kansas State Normal School at Emporia has recently issued a useful collection of suggestions for games, entitled "German Games and German and English Books." Directions are given in German for playing many interesting games suitable both for clubs and class room. Unfortunately this pamphlet is not available for wide distribution at the present, but may be later.

In the October (1916) number of *Aus Nah und Fern*, p. 21, is an article by Adele Meyer Autcalt on "Der Deutsche Verein," which includes "Satzungen des Deutschen Vereins," a most excellent Constitution for any club to adopt. It is divided into seven articles:

- I Name und Zweck.
- II Mitgliederschaft.
- III Pflichten der Mitglieder.
- IV Versammlungen.
- V Vorstand.
- VI Pflichten des Vorsitzenden.
- VII Änderungen und Zusätze.

She promises in a later number "Eine Liste von Ausdrücken, die man in der Sitzung gebraucht," and further suggestions to add to

a valuable list consisting of stereopticon views, songs, special programs appropriate to the seasons, as "*Ostereiersuchen*."

Her suggestions as to the sources of material for club programs are scarcely applicable in our club, however, as she suggests that the class work be made the basis for reading extracts, dramatizations, remarks on the life of the author, and his native town. Our club is composed of members of half a dozen different classes, many of whom have used no book beyond their Grammar, and different Grammars are used in different classes.

As to membership, we are most liberal. Any member of the school who has had one semester of German may ask to have his, or usually her, name presented. If the sponsor approves, she presents the name of the candidate to the President, and it is voted on at the next meeting. The meetings are held on alternate Thursdays, alternating with the Literary Societies and Debating Clubs, which makes it possible to join both Literary and Departmental Clubs. There are a great variety of Departmental Clubs: German, French, Latin, Wireless, Scientific, Dramatic, etc., and as any member in good standing may transfer to any club in which he is more interested, the membership is constantly shifting. The clubs meet from 4:30 to 5:30 p. m., and as we have an extremely long session lasting from 8:30 a. m. to 4:30 p. m., with no recess except at noon, neither teachers nor pupils at the end of so long a session are as full of vitality as they should be to make a most successful meeting.

Believing that other teachers may find themselves leaders of a group of young people, whose capacity for initiating or executing stimulating programs is very slight, but whose critical taste and craving for amusement is highly developed, and not always easy to satisfy, I shall suggest some of the diversions which we have found practical and successful.

The club sponsors are supposed to be merely advisers, but in a language club, the secret of success is in supervising not only every program but the work of every member. Each member who is to appear in any way must have consulted with the sponsor and usually have rehearsed—often rehearsed several times—, for unless he speaks slowly, uses the most simple words, and repeats what is difficult, he cannot make himself understood. A teacher can read a story to her class and make every pupil understand it.

Let a pupil read the same story and not half of them will grasp it; but an able pupil may be taught how to read the story and make it understood. The pupils are not able to plan the programs without guidance, for they usually lose sight of the main object which is *to make every member converse or say something in German at every meeting; to practise talking.*

If the requirements are too complicated or too difficult, no one will speak; if too formal or too long, only three or four take part, and usually the same already most expert three or four. This was the cause of failure in a scheme which was tried last year. Four members of the German faculty were responsible for the club, each taking charge of a meeting in turn. The programs were quite elaborate, very thoroughly planned, and most interesting. One was a puppet play, "Ein Knopf" from Manley & Allen's "Four German Comedies," and much time was spent in preparation. Four or five of the best pupils read the parts, two or three others manipulated the puppets, which were most amusing in form and movement, so that the club was greatly entertained, although I doubt whether they understood much of the German. The next meeting was in memory of the Shakespeare tercentenary. Choice selections were copied for each member. Some appropriate music and songs were rendered and a scene from "Midsummer Night's Dream" given. In this scene the same most clever five or six were chosen by the teacher in charge, who wished her meeting to be as successful as the last. The third meeting was a lantern-slide talk by a few of the members. Only two or three were asked to explain the pictures, and again the same most expert students, who needed the practice least, were given the advantage. So, for several months the less talented, who were really the majority, were only a very well entertained audience, a position which they were only too willing to occupy, and in which they spend altogether more time than is profitable.

This year one teacher has charge of all programs, except the Christmas program, and the annual picnic, which occurs at the last meeting in the spring. The meetings are as general as possible, each member knowing that he is to take some part, to practise speaking German, and to contribute to the interest of every meeting. The president opens the meeting with: "Hiermit eröffne ich die Versammlung," and conducts the meeting

in German; in fact no word of English is supposed to be used by anyone, and rarely is. On the program, which is posted on the bulletin board, it has been announced that the roll will be answered by an appropriate greeting, at Christmas; by the name of a composer, at a musical program; by the name of some German city, or river, or state, at a stereopticon meeting; by a German word spelled backward, which the other members name as soon as it is recognized; by a proverb; by the name of a character in William Tell; by a mythical hero; by something appropriate to the meeting of the day. Hereupon the secretary reads the minutes of the preceding meeting; the sponsor has previously corrected and revised them. If there are no objections, they are approved. The usual routine of business is transacted. The critic of the former meeting reads his report, and as he has previously consulted with the sponsor, the latter has an opportunity here to suggest and criticise indirectly. A new critic is appointed. The vice-president, who is the chairman of the program committee (consisting of president, one member appointed by the president, and the sponsor), then announces and explains the program for the next meeting. A song or two is sung. The formal program is presented. We play a game or two. A motion for adjournment is made, seconded, and the president concludes the meeting. The first half of the year the sponsor instructs one pupil to say at a signal from her, or at the request of the president, "Ich mache den Vorschlag die Versammlung zu vertagen;" another to say "Ich unterstütze den Vorschlag."

Examples of Formal Programs

I. A simple program for the beginning of the year.

Each member has advised with the sponsor, and chosen some object which he is to describe without naming it. It may be a chair, whose four legs and back he describes elaborately, and concludes with a statement of its use, which makes one wonder if it might be a horse. It may be a building, for example the postoffice building; a person, perhaps; or an animal. The secretary keeps the list of numbers and subjects chosen. At the meeting each member is provided with paper and pencil, and as each in turn gives his description, all the others put down what they guess it is that has been described. The papers are then

collected, the list compared with the secretary's list, and the one having the greatest number of correct guesses receives a prize.

A long word is then written on the board, for example, "Naturwissenschaft." At a given signal all begin to write words formed from the letters contained in the word on the board, until the signal is given to stop. The one having written the most words receives a prize, and his list is read.

For the game on that day, one might play "Consequences." Each person is supplied with a long strip of paper, at the top of which he writes:

1. A man's name or title; folds the paper over, passes it to his right-hand neighbor, who writes
2. A woman's name or title; folds and passes. Then there is written
3. Where they meet;
4. What he says;
5. What she says; and
6. The consequences.

After passing once more, the papers are opened and read, and the sequence is often most amusing.

II. A Thanksgiving program.

It has been announced that the club is to fill a Thanksgiving basket, to help supply one of the dinners to be given out by the Associated Charities. Each member is to tell why or for what he, personally, is thankful. (Some give serious reasons, others humorous). Also, what he is willing to furnish for the dinner. The sponsor has advised with each, so that there may be a variety, that the gifts may be reasonable and moderate, and that each child may know the German word for his gift—pie, pumpkin, or jelly, etc. A few of the older members read papers which they have prepared, to show why the world at large, or we Americans in particular, should be thankful. Another member reads an appropriate story; for example "Die kleine Wohltäterin" from Collar's "First Year German" (Ginn).

A game, well suited to the day, would be to draw on the board a basket overflowing with fruit, vegetables, etc. One member begins by saying "Ich packe den Danksagungskorb mit Äpfeln." The rest in order: "Ich packe den Danksagungskorb mit Äpfeln

und Kuchen," the next repeating and adding a third article, and so on. It is remarkable to see how long a list can be repeated before a mistake is made in the order, or even in the use of singular for plural, etc. The instant a mistake is made, hands are clapped, and a forfeit is demanded by the vice-president, who is always master of the games.

Games requiring forfeits are very popular, as the redeeming of forfeits furnishes much amusement. (The same "stunts" may be used at a mock initiation in the Fall, when a large number of new members are elected). One member, who has been posted by the sponsor, is seated while the vice-president holds a forfeit over his head, and asks: "Was soll der Besitzer tun, um sein Pfand zu lösen?" The one seated answers:

1. "Der Besitzer soll auf einen Stuhl steigen und dreimal krähen: "Kikeriki, es ist noch zu früh!"

2. "Erklären, was man am liebsten tut und warum."

3. "Erklären, welche Spielerin—Kino-Königin—man am liebsten sieht, und warum." (Movies are of necessity favorite topics of conversation.)

4. "Drei Vorzüge nennen, die die Knaben vor den Mädchen haben, oder die Mädchen vor den Knaben."

5. "Erklären, was man für das Beste in der Welt hält, und warum."

6. "Ein Gedicht deklamieren."

7. "Ein Wort zwanzigmal an die Tafel schreiben."

8. "Amerikanerinnen rückwärts buchstabieren."

Many other suggestions are made by Allen and Phillipson, e.g., comparisons and singing; but with us the simpler acts are preferred, and are performed more promptly and furnish more amusement.

III. A musical program.

A brief sketch of the life of a composer is given by one member, followed by an explanation of the piece to be performed by another. The selections may be vocal or instrumental, or if a Victrola is available the choice is even wider, and the words of a song may be read before the piece is given. Naturally, there is no end of material for such programs.

IV. A favorite program, which we call a Conversation Meeting.

Each member is supplied with a program similar to a dance card—sometimes with pencil attached. He then secures a partner for each of the subjects for conversation, as if for a dance. The subjects vary, but might be

1. Das Wetter.
2. Meine Lehrer und Lehrerinnen.
3. Meine Spielkameraden.
4. Was ich am liebsten tue.
5. Die allerliebste Jahreszeit.
6. Spiele.

At a given signal each finds the first partner, and converses upon the first subject until the signal is given to pass to number two.

V. Each member relates an anecdote.

Anecdotes are related to the sponsor in rehearsal, so that they will not include words unknown to the majority, or so they will not be spoiled by rapid or indistinct recitation. Sometimes a vote is taken for the best anecdote and a prize awarded.

VI. Charades.

The club is divided into groups, each being responsible for one or two charades, which the others guess. The sponsor must see that they are rehearsed before being presented, as young people depend too confidently upon the inspiration of the moment. One might act out *Sicher—Kaufmann—Bismarck—Ausruf—Überbord—Überrock*.

VII. Spelling down.

For variety, sides may be chosen, and when one side misses, and the other side spells the word correctly, it can choose a member from the losing side. One might give out the words of a well-known poem, "Der Erlkönig" for example.

VIII. Stereopticon pictures.

If each pupil describes two or three slides, he secures much profit. The sponsor provides each pupil with his slides, and an explanation of what is to be done, urging him to find everything of interest that he can in the picture. After he has prepared and

learned his description he practises before the sponsor. Perhaps this point seems over-emphasized, but it is of extreme importance and it makes all the difference between a successful meeting and a failure, whether the pupil can "get across" what he has to give.

Several meetings with slides can be held, using pictures

a. Of typical German scenes.

b. Of the great cities of Germany.

c. Of the Rhine, where the river is traced from source to mouth, and as each castle is shown the story of the castle is told. These stories may be found in "Im Vaterland," (Allyn and Bacon), "Geschichten vom Rhein" (Ginn), and Prokosch's "German for Beginners" (Holt).

d. Of the homes of celebrities. Weimar, and the houses of Goethe and Schiller. Worms, and Luther. Mainz, and Gutenberg, etc.

IX. Illustrated poems.

Some well-known poems are acted out in a farcical way. As one member reads "Heidenröslein," two others act out the poem. A girl in pink paper rose cap and armed with a hat-pin defends herself, while the wild boy tries to grasp her. As another reads "Die Lorelei" a boatman sitting in a small tin tub is fishing, and gazing at the rocks, made of table, chair, and stool, and covered with a sheet, on which the maid sits combing her hair. A tragic ending ensues. Another reads Chamisso's "Tragische Geschichte" while a boy in pigtailed wig and kimono twists frantically from left to right, etc. Another reads "Der weisse Hirsch" by Uhland. Here each hunter may speak his own part, blow his horn, etc., as the white deer covered by a sheet dashes by. "Du bist wie eine Blume" and "Versuchung" might be treated in the same frivolous manner.

X. Living pictures.

A mythological story is told of a hero or heroine mentioned in the German grammars, or readers, and a tableau follows, as Barbarossa and his Dwarf, Thor and his Hammer, Siegfried and his Sword.

XI. A newspaper.

One person is appointed editor-in-chief, who appoints a sub-

editor for each department, with assistants, including thus the entire membership. The departments may include

News at large.

Local news.

Sporting news.

Personal items. (Being humorous reports of the doings of various members.)

Advertisements. (Mentioning the foibles of the various members.)

Editorials. (Fictitious announcements of changes in the school curriculum, etc.)

XII. William Tell meeting.

1. A few remarks on the author, date, etc.

2. A description of the opening scene, with its storm as an introduction to

3. The playing of an overture by a victrola, or on the piano.

4. Recitation or singing of the songs in Act I, Scene I, or Act III, Scene I.

5. Melchthal's monologue on blindness, Act I, Scene IV.

6. The acting out of the beginning of Act III, Scene I.

7. The apple shooting scene, Act III, Scene III.

XIII. Dialogues, etc.

Simple scenes and conversations may be adapted from "Vorwärts," "Im Vaterland" (both Allyn and Bacon) or based on the stories in "Lose Blätter" (Am. Book Co.). The Francis Parker School (Chicago) has prepared some dialogues, and others may be secured from the Geo. Brumder Company in Milwaukee, or from other German publishing houses. In Walter-Krause's "Beginners' German" (Scribner) are many good riddles.

XIV. A Christmas program.

Each member has previously contributed ten cents toward the refreshments and furnished a toy wrapped and labeled. As examples of these labels I quote two composed by pupils this year. On a tin boat: "Hier ist das Deutschland. Fahre nach England und kämpfe fürs Vaterland." On a woolly dog: "Ich bin ein kleiner deutscher Hund, Und kann kein Englisch sprechen,

Doch leb' ich fröhlich und gesund, Wenn Sie mich nimmer necken." After the preliminary business, a Christmas Fairy, or "Sankt Nicklas" or "Knecht Ruprecht" distributes to each member a number.

Then a Christmas dialogue is given, or an adaptation from Bernhardt's Composition, Lesson 4 (Ginn), "Der Christbaum," when each tree states its claim to being pronounced the favorite. Each member with some symbol represents a tree, and appeals to the judge. *Die Eiche* speaks of the strength of its wood and shows its acorns as *Früchte*. *Der Kirschbaum* scorns the "Früchte für die Schweine" and shows her fruit, etc. Finally the Christmas tree's claims are admitted, and a screen is removed disclosing a lighted Christmas tree. The gifts are then distributed by number, the inscriptions are read, and while the horns are tooting and the drums beating, the refreshments of apples, candy, Christmas cakes, etc., are passed.¹

Many of the following games are too common to need description, but I shall suggest how they may be played so that they will furnish the most profit and amusement.

1. *Proverbs*. Half of a German proverb is printed on one card, half on another. The cards are shuffled and dealt. (Not more than four or five to each person should be dealt, and not more than ten persons should play the game in one group. We have two sets of cards with different proverbs, and alternate the sets). Each person in turn draws from his neighbor. As soon as a complete proverb is held, it is read aloud and laid aside as a set. The person securing the most sets wins the game.

2. *Ich sehe etwas*. The club is divided into two groups by numbering *eins*, *zwei*; *eins*, *zwei*. All numbered *eins*, sit in a circle at one end of the room. All numbered *zwei* at the other end of the room. Each group sends one member out of the room. When the two agree upon some object in the room, each returns to the opposite group and announces, "Ich sehe etwas." Then in turn each member asks a question in the hope of guessing as quickly as possible the object. The one questioned can answer to these questions only *ja* or *nein*. The group which guesses the object first chooses a member from the other side, and much

¹An excellent and simple play is "*Das schönste Bild*" from "*Zum Weihnachtsfeste*," *gesammelt von J. Christlieb*. (Brumder, Milwaukee).

excitement and eagerness to be the first and enlarge one's group is developed. As the pupils become more skillful, this game can be played by announcing "Ich denke an etwas" which leads to a wider choice of objects, and more complicated questioning. This game is usually played with all of the group knowing the object except the one sent out, but if reversed and played as described above, the many instead of the one ask the German questions and derive the benefit of the language practice.

3. *Das Uhrspiel.* With the same general arrangement, a time of day is agreed upon by the two members who leave the room, and much practice in fluency and accuracy of idiom in expressions of time is gained by those eager to get the answer first. There is soon no beating around the bush. No. 1 asks: "Ist es vormittags?"—"Nein." No. 2: "Ist es nachmittags?"—"Nein." No. 3: "Ist es denn nach sechs Uhr?"—"Ja." No. 4: "Ist es zwischen sechs und neun?" usw.

4. *Kofferpacken.* The game outlined in the Thanksgiving program may be played, by saying "Ich packe meinen Koffer mit—". When this becomes too simple an adjective may be added to the object packed.

5. *The Circle Game.* By numbering *eins, zwei; eins, zwei*, the club is divided and two circles are formed, one within the other. The sponsor, perhaps, stands in the center and counts and the circles revolve while she counts. When she stops, they stop, and each No. 1 asks a question of the opposite No. 2, and receives an answer very quickly, because as the counting begins the circles must revolve again. However, at the next pause the No. 2 asks the question, and No. 1 answers. As some confusion usually occurs and both ask questions at once and try to answer at once, much merriment is aroused.

6. *Drei Fragen.* The questioner leaves the room, while the others choose some object. Upon her return she can ask just three questions of each one: Wie gebrauchen Sie es?

Wann (oder wo) gebrauchen Sie es?

Warum gebrauchen Sie es?

The person from whose answers the object is guessed becomes the next questioner.

7. *Spelling Game.* All sit in a circle. The first person names a letter of the alphabet; the next in turn names another letter,

which might go toward forming a word; and so on. If one cannot think of a letter he must pay a forfeit, or if he thinks the previous letter will not form a word he may challenge the giver, who must spell the word correctly or pay a forfeit. No forfeit is required for ending a word.

8. *Land—Luft—Wasser*. All sit in a circle. One member holds a knotted towel, which he throws at another member, calling at the same time "Land" or "Luft" or "Wasser." He then begins to count ten. Before "zehn" is uttered the player designated must have named a creature of the land, air, or water, depending upon which is called for. If he cannot name one, he becomes "it." While vocabularies are still limited, a list of animals which can be used is placed on the blackboard. This game can be varied by calling "Was bringt die Zeitung?" Then the reply must be a word ending in "ung;" or by calling "Wie ist der Knabe gekommen?" The answer to be an appropriate past participle, as *gelaufen—gesprungen*.

9. *In another circle game*, questions are asked, which must be answered in words of one syllable, or a forfeit is required.

10. *Die böse Sieben*. All count in turn, about a circle. The one whose turn it is to say a number containing 7 or a multiple of 7, must say instead *brrr*—. A forfeit is the result if a mistake is made.

Games like "Authors" can be played, as *Tierquartett—Vogelquartett—Pflanzenquartett*. Lists suitable for these games are published in a most useful little pamphlet by Philip S. Allen, entitled "Hints on the Teaching of German Conversation" (Ginn).

At the last meeting of each semester the officers for the coming semester are elected. By printing in large letters in both English and German on sheets of stiff pasteboard, the expressions necessary in nominating officers, closing nominations, preparing the ballots, etc., and tacking these sheets up in the front of the room where all can see, the election of officers can be conducted in German. This form of meeting always arouses a great enthusiasm; in fact, so much so that we have sometimes held mock elections for parliamentary practice, in which election each member must take some part, nominate an officer, or make a motion; if so ridiculous a one results as that which proposed that the club "buy a cow," it often leads to lively discussions.

I have added here the very simple forms used by the president in conducting the meeting.

Hiemit eröffne ich die Versammlung.

Der Sekretär wird ersucht den Appell zu verlesen.

Beantworten Sie, bitte, mit—.

Der Sekretär (Schriftführer) wird ersucht, das Protokoll der letzten Versammlung (Sitzung) zu verlesen.

Wenn niemand etwas dagegen hat, ist es angenommen.

Ich ersuche den Vize-Präsidenten das nächste Programm zu verlesen.

Ich ersuche den Kritiker seine Kritik zu verlesen.

Ich nenne—— zum Kritiker.

Gibt es anderes Geschäft?

Höre ich einen Vorschlag zu vertagen?

Ich schliesse die Sitzung.

CAROLINE M. YOUNG.

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